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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-seventh year

Identical letters dated 6 January 2012 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Once again, we are compelled to draw attention to the systematic violations of international law, including humanitarian law and human rights law, being perpetrated against the Palestinian people by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The failure of the international community, in particular the United Nations Security Council, to seriously and effectively address these violations to end impunity and hold Israel accountable for its crimes throughout this 44-year military occupation of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, has undoubtedly emboldened the occupying Power, as reflected in its intensifying violations and illegal policies over the recent period.

Since my last letter to you on 19 December 2011, I must inform you of the following violations committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people. These incidents represent but a few examples of the daily crimes and collective punishment our people are tragically enduring under this brutal occupation:

- Israeli occupying forces continued to target Palestinian civilians and civilian infrastructure, causing more death and terror in the occupied and besieged Gaza Strip. On 17 December 2011, the occupying forces shelled an area east of Bureij refugee camp in the centre of Gaza, causing the death of 35-year-old Majid Nabhan. On the same day, off the coast of Gaza, Israeli gunboats continued to fire at Palestinian fishing boats in the Al Sudaniya area in northern Gaza. Also, in Gaza City, Zaki Tarosh, 45 years old, was shot in the leg after Israeli gunboats opened fire at a group of fishermen near the city's shore. On 4 January 2012, Israeli forces bulldozed some of the remaining infrastructure at Al Mintar (Karni) crossing, including offices located on the Palestinian side inside Gaza.

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- Illegal Israeli settlers continued to terrorize the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied West Bank, including in East Jerusalem. On 18 December 2011, Muhammad Munjid, an elementary school student, was run over by a settler bus on a road south of Nablus. Settlers who exited the bus then began attacking Fadi Ahmad Samara, 32 years old, at the scene of the crime. Muhammad was later rushed to the hospital, where he was in serious condition. On 30 December 2011, a group of 200 armed Israeli settlers from the illegal settlement "Efrat" broke into the Solomon Pools site and the Conference Palace archaeological areas in Al Khader in southern Bethlehem. On 4 January 2012, illegal settlers set fire to two Palestinian-owned vehicles in the neighbourhood of Beit Safafa in occupied East Jerusalem near the illegal Israeli settlement "Gilo". The settlers spray painted "price-tag" and "revenge" on the burnt cars.

- On 30 December 2011, in Al Khalil, settlers from the illegal settlement "Tel Rumedia" sprayed a young Palestinian, Arafat al-Bayid, 14 years old, with nerve gas and physically assaulted him. Arafat was later taken to a hospital, where he was treated for burns to the face and eyes. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that during 2011, illegal Israeli settlers vandalized over 10,000 Palestinian olive trees, while Israeli occupying forces destroyed 90 water structures throughout the occupied West Bank.

- In this regard, Israeli occupying forces continued to destroy many other civilian structures and properties belonging to Palestinians throughout the occupied West Bank in recent weeks. On 20 December 2011, in southern Nablus, 30 military vehicles carrying soldiers of the occupying army destroyed a 4-km road serving the villages of Beita, Osarin and Aqraba. The occupying forces also took control of the home of Ayman Ihsan Adeile and set camp on a hilltop east of Beita. In Fasayil, in the Jordan Valley, Israeli occupying forces demolished several structures in the Bedouin village after handing out demolition orders just a day before. Structures belonging to Omar Ubayyat, Abed Yasin Rashayda and Hussein Rashayda were destroyed. In the Silwan neighbourhood of occupied East Jerusalem, Israeli bulldozers demolished a Palestinian-owned structure in order to establish a parking lot for Jewish settlers, and in the Sawwanah neighbourhood of the City, Israeli forces razed a playing field belonging to Al-Ibrahimiya College for the purpose of establishing a so-called Israeli national security college.

- On 30 December 2011, Israeli occupying forces issued several notices to take over 50 dunums of land in the towns of Az-Zawiya and Masha, west of Salfit, for the expansion of their illegal annexation Wall, and to build a new checkpoint. In the town of Al Khader, south of Bethlehem, Israeli occupying forces issued a notice to confiscate 170 dunums of land and isolate 20,000 dunums of Palestinian agricultural land behind the Wall.

- On 3 January 2012, undercover Israeli occupying forces kidnapped and detained Muhammad Ali Dirbas, 6 years old, on his way to a shop in the Al Essawyia neighbourhood of occupied East Jerusalem. Muhammad was interrogated and eventually released and his family took him to a hospital for a medical examination. This practice by the occupying forces, referred to as "mapping", has resulted in the detention, the interrogation, the photographing and the terrorizing of hundreds of Palestinian children, many times in the

darkness of night, with their parents helpless to stop this cruelty in the face of the lethal force of the occupying Power.

Moreover, during recent weeks, Israel's illegal colonization campaign continued with great intensity throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in and around East Jerusalem. On 28 December 2011, the Israeli Government announced another 130 new units in the illegal settlement "Gilo", near Beit Jala, and north of Bethlehem, as well as plans to construct a "tourist complex" in the Silwan neighbourhood of occupied East Jerusalem, with plans for a parking lot, archaeological park and reception halls.

The ongoing settlement campaign in Silwan is co-organized by the occupying Power's municipality and the settler organization Ir David Foundation, also known as the Elad Association, whose goal is to judaize the City by replacing the indigenous Christian and Muslim Palestinian population with Jewish settlers. Alarming is the fact that Ir David Foundation receives tax-deductible donations from citizens of two Member States, in the United States through Friends of Ir David (tax ID #: 11-346-6176, tax exempt status: 501(c)(3)) and in the United Kingdom through UK Friends of the City of David (UK Charity Registration #: 1121683). We urge Member States not to offer any State-sanctioned benefits for settler organizations that operate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which threaten the very foundation of the two-State solution, especially organizations that contravene international law, in accordance with their responsibilities as third States under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

On 3 January 2012, the Israeli Government issued three new tenders for construction of yet another 300 settlement units in Occupied East Jerusalem: 47 in the illegal settlement of "Pisgat Ze'ev", and 247 in the illegal settlement of "Har Homa" in Jabal Abu Ghniem. The announcement of these tenders came just as the Israeli and Palestinian sides met in Amman, Jordan, under the auspices of His Majesty King Abdullah II and His Excellency Mr. Nasser Judeh, Foreign Minister of Jordan, as the entire international community is attempting to aid the resumption of credible negotiations between the two sides on the basis of the Madrid terms of reference, United Nations resolutions, the Quartet road map and the Arab Peace Initiative. Such illegal settlement activities by Israel continue to undermine such efforts and leave little credibility to the occupying Power's claims of good faith at the negotiating table.

In this regard, on 25 December 2011, the Foreign Minister of Israel said to a meeting of Israeli ambassadors that Israel must work to manage the conflict, not resolve it. Speaking about the current status quo and not reaching a peace agreement within the next decade, he said "in the next decade, this will be the situation and we need to know how to deal with it in the best way possible for both sides". Such repeated remarks by high-ranking Israeli officials cast serious doubts about Israel's commitment and intentions regarding the two-State solution and further undermine confidence and deepen mistrust.

Without doubt, the Palestinian people and their leadership, the Arab countries and the entirety of the international community wish to see Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security, and they are exerting all efforts towards the achievement of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders and a just and lasting peace. Efforts continue to be exerted by the United Nations towards this end, the Quartet continues its efforts, the Arab Peace Initiative still stands and all

peace-loving countries of the world continue to support the two-State solution and the efforts in this regard. However, it is more than evident that the current Israeli Government does not have a vision for peace, as it continues instead with its expansionist colonial agenda of occupation, settlement colonization and collective punishment and subjugation of the Palestinian people and denial of their inalienable rights, including to self-determination and freedom. All of these illegal policies and practices by the occupying Power are totally contradictory to the two-State solution for peace and constitute direct and deliberate affronts to the international and regional efforts to achieve peace and security, and for this Israel must be held accountable.

We thus appeal again to the international community, in particular the Security Council, to act with conviction to send a clear signal to Israel, the occupying Power, that all of these illegal actions will not be tolerated and must be brought to a complete halt. Collective and serious measures must be taken to ensure accountability if Israel refuses to comply with the legal obligations incumbent upon it, including under the Fourth Geneva Convention. Barring this, we will only continue to witness the further deterioration of the situation on the ground, the failure of any and all efforts to restore confidence between the two sides and to revive the peace process, and the further destruction of the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders, with grave consequences for our peoples and the region as a whole.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 415 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 19 December 2011 (A/ES-10/543-S/2011/783), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations